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DOCTOR, PATIENT DIALOGUE MAY HELP PREVENT SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES

ADA, ACC Encourage People with Diabetes to Discuss Health Risks During National Diabetes Month

ALEXANDRIA, VA (November 17, 2003) – Most people with diabetes are aware of their risks for serious complications, such as kidney and vision problems, but they aren't aware of their risk for the most deadly diabetes-related complications – heart disease and stroke. During November's Diabetes Month, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the American College of Cardiology (ACC) are encouraging people with diabetes to talk to their doctor about their risk for cardiovascular disease, which kills two out of three people with diabetes.

People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke than people without diabetes. Yet a survey of people with diabetes showed that 68 percent were not aware of their increased risk for heart disease and stroke. Also, 60 percent of people with diabetes were not aware that they are at risk for having high blood pressure and high cholesterol, conditions common in people with diabetes that contribute to their increased risk for heart disease and stroke.

"We are particularly concerned about the large percentage of people with diabetes who do not understand the link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease and what they can do to reduce their risks," said Eugene Barrett, MD, Ph.D., President, American Diabetes Association.

"People with diabetes need to know that good diabetes management is more than lowering just blood glucose (sugar). A diabetes care plan should also address lowering blood pressure and cholesterol, quitting smoking, and taking aspirin and other medicines to reduce one's risk for heart attack and stroke," added Dr. Barrett.

James Galloway, MD, of the ACC's *Make the Link!* Advisory Committee, echoes Dr. Barrett's concerns. "We can't emphasize enough the critical need to help our patients with diabetes better understand and manage their cardiovascular risks," he said. "Diabetes is a very complex disease, but we have the resources at hand to help patients reduce their risk of life-threatening complications."

Through an initiative called *Make the Link! Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke*, the ADA and ACC are reminding the public about the "ABCs" of diabetes, which should be checked regularly. **A** is for the A1C test, which measures the average blood glucose over the past 2 to 3 months; **B** is for blood pressure; and **C** is for cholesterol.

Recommended Targets:

- **A1C** - less than 7 percent. Check at least twice a year.
- **Blood pressure** - below 130/80. Check at every doctor's visit.
- **Cholesterol (LDL)** - below 100. Check at least once a year.

A new tool is available to help people with diabetes talk to their health care provider about the best ways to prevent a heart attack or stroke. This tool features key questions to ask at your next visit, such as:

- What are my ABC numbers and goals?
- What steps can I take to reach each of my ABC goals?
- What medicines help reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke?
- Do I need special testing to detect heart disease?

To receive this free tool, contact the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383).

Make the Link! Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke is an initiative focused on reducing deaths associated with diabetes, heart disease and stroke. The initiative encourages people with diabetes and their health care providers to work together to manage diabetes more comprehensively, to reduce risk factors that could lead to heart disease and stroke, and to remind people that diabetes management goes beyond controlling just blood sugar.

The *Make the Link!* initiative works in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) to promote awareness of the ABCs of diabetes through its program, "Be Smart About Your Heart: Control the ABCs of Diabetes."

Make the Link! is made possible by generous support from the following sponsors: AstraZeneca LP; Bristol-Myers Squibb Company; Eli Lilly and Company; GlaxoSmithKline; Merck & Co. and Merck/Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals; Monarch Pharmaceuticals and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals; Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation; and Pfizer Inc.

For more information on the link between diabetes and heart disease, contact the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES or visit www.diabetes.org/makethelink; or call 1-800-438-5383 or visit NDEP at <http://ndep.nih.gov>.

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